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New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Katzarski
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Pinguet
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Stanislavov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Atieh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security

Briefing by Mr. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme

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02-71810 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of December, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to my predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, for his service and leadership as President of the Security Council for the month of November 2002, as well as to the other members of his delegation.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security

Briefing by Mr. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. James Morris.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. James Morris, to take a seat at the Council table.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. James Morris, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Morris: The World Food Programme is deeply honoured to be here with you, Mr. President, and your colleagues today. The World Food Programme is the agency of the United Nations that is charged with responsibility for feeding the world's hungriest, poorest people, wherever they might be. Last year, we fed about 80 million people in 83 countries. Ten years ago, 80 per cent of our work would have been in development. Today, 80 per cent of our work is responding to emergencies. Our challenge is to respond to emergencies in such a way that some permanent advantage accrues to the benefit of the individuals we are helping, and to feed people in such a way that their educational opportunities, that their health and nutrition are enhanced and, ultimately, that their livelihood, food security and creation of assets are strengthened.

I have been on the job only eight months. We have about 9,000 employees and we are headquartered in Rome; 700 of our employees are in Rome. When I visit with my senior colleagues, they tell me that never in the history of the World Food Programme have we had as many difficult challenges before us. We work all over the world. Last year we were feeding 10 million people in Afghanistan and 6.5 million people in North Korea. We are currently feeding half a million people in the Palestinian territories. We have concluded our work in East Timor, Kosovo and Yugoslavia. But I am here to report that about 60 per cent of our work today takes place in Africa.

Five places in Africa are experiencing very severe problems. The issues in Africa represent a combination of very difficult weather situations, exacerbated by the El Niño phenomenon; very difficult health issues, dramatically complicated by HIV/AIDS — I will talk more about that in a few minutes; civil strife; a huge number of refugees and internally displaced people; landmines; the issue of genetically modified organisms (GMOs); and very challenging issues relating to governance and economic policy.

For us to do what is expected of us, our Board has approved a work programme this year of between $2.5 billion and $3 billion. All of our support comes from voluntary contributions from Governments. We essentially receive 90 per cent of what we have to work with from 10 entities, including the European Community. We need more support from our current donors, and we need new donors to come in and be our partners. We are very grateful that countries such as Russia, China, India, Oman, Peru and Algeria — it is quite a long list — have decided to help us for the first time this year. Much of that support is directed to the work that is being done in southern Africa.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has been our great, great friend. In July, he asked me to be his special envoy to look at humanitarian issues in the six southern African countries of Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland. The fact of the matter is that there are 14.5 million people in those six countries who are severely at risk of starvation — half of them in Zimbabwe, approximately 3 million each in Zambia and Malawi, and several hundred thousand in the other three countries. Mozambique is affected only in the south.

The effects of serious weather problems have been dramatically complicated by HIV/AIDS. I would say that the HIV/AIDS epidemic has radically changed the economic landscape of those six countries. During my recent visit there, I spent a great deal of time with teachers and with young people. There are 11 million AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa and 4.6 million orphans in the six countries I mentioned, 60 per cent of whom were orphaned because both their mother and father died of AIDS. This is a tragic fact of life. AIDS leads to all sorts of other serious health problems — cholera, tuberculosis, malaria, polio, diarrhoea, and so on.

There is a very difficult weather situation, an incredible health situation with HIV/AIDS, and also tough issues related to governance and to macro-economic policy. Clearly, for the long haul, for situations like this to be substantially addressed and alleviated, there needs to be a major opening up of economies and a strengthening of the role of the free market. A whole range of new economic influences that have made countries around the world successful need to come into play here.

Most importantly, there must be substantial investment in agricultural infrastructure. I think that the countries around the world that support development have lost their focus on the importance of fundamental basic investment in agricultural infrastructure, and I think that it is beginning to turn around. But for people to become food self-sufficient, they need to have a basic, strong agricultural system, and I am grateful that countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States have now substantially increased their investment in agricultural infrastructure.

A second area in Africa that is of great concern is what we would call the greater Horn of Africa. Some would define that as only Ethiopia and Eritrea, but we would include the Sudan. Ethiopia and Eritrea are countries that depend heavily on rain-fed agriculture for their crops and for their pastoral livestock. They have had a very difficult weather situation this past year — virtually no spring rains, and the fall rains came late. The agricultural crop this year in Eritrea will be 20 per cent of what it was last year, and the crop in Ethiopia will be decreased by 20 per cent, with about a sixth of the population severely at risk. The worst-case scenario would be that as many as 15 million people — a number comparable to that in southern Africa — will be at risk in the Horn.

In addition, the World Food Programme is feeding 2.9 million people in the Sudan every day. The situation there is a result of the combination of weather factors, the conflict and refugees. In the western Sahel — especially in Mauritania — but also in the Gambia, Mali, Senegal and Cape Verde, there have been serious drought problems. Thank God, there has not been conflict there, but as many as 750,000 people could be at risk because of the weather in the western Sahel.

In West Africa — Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire — another million people are at risk, and it could be substantially more than that because of the strife and because of the huge population of refugees and internally displaced persons who move around in the area. If all of this is pulled together, one quickly comes to the conclusion that between 38 million and 40 million are at risk of starvation in Africa.

The World Food Programme is the largest humanitarian agency in the world. We have 2,000 non-governmental organization (NGO) partners all around the world, and our budget for our work in these places in Africa is about $1.4 billion. To date we have raised slightly more than $700 million. This does not take into account the work that we do in school feeding or with nutritional enhancement, and so on.

The fact of the matter is that weather problems are simply dramatically more serious today than they were 10 years ago. In the early 1990s, we averaged 18 emergency food assessments for the first five years. In the second five years of the 1990s, we average 33 emergency food assessments, nearly twice that number.

In order for progress to be made, half a dozen things need to happen. We need to have, as I said

earlier, stronger and more consistent funding of humanitarian aid. The amount of food aid in the world in the last three years has decreased from 15 million tons a year to 11 million tons, a decrease of 25 per cent. A total of 62 per cent of the support for the World Food Programme comes from the United States. We are incredibly grateful to the United States for its generosity, but it is not healthy and it is not sustainable for one country or provide such a huge percentage of a single organization's budget.

Clearly there needs to be more basic investment in agriculture. There is no country in the world that has had economic success that did not first put in place a very substantial agricultural economy. As I mentioned, I am especially grateful to the United Kingdom, because it has increased its investment in basic agriculture fivefold.

Thirdly, the private sector needs to be allowed to function. In some of the places where we have the most difficulty, there is no functioning private sector; there is no market; prices are set; and grain dealers are not allowed to do their work. Without private-sector incentives, initiatives and rewards, adequate crops will not be available. We need to make a much more substantial investment in nutrition. A modest investment in nutrition may have the greatest leverage for strengthening people's energy and health.

Secondly, investment in our school feeding programme may be the most important thing we do. Last year, we fed 15 million children in 57 countries around the world. The fact of the matter is that there are 800 million hungry people and 300 million hungry children, half of whom do not go to school. This problem disproportionately affects young women. We have a practice in which we offer a school meal as an incentive for a child to come to school. A meal encourages the parents to send the child to school. Once the child is in school and not hungry, the child can begin to learn.

We can work with the World Health Organization for all sorts of significant health interventions. Half of those children are infected with worms. For 30 cents a year, a child can be cured of worms. If a child has worms, 50 per cent of the nutritional value of what the child eats goes to feed the worms. So the impact of feeding a school child, which we can do for $38 a year or 19 cents a day, can dramatically change a child's life. From a perspective of peace and security, there is no substitute for offering hope and opportunity to young people so that they, too, can have positive dreams for their lives and stay away from mischief.

I want to take one or two minutes to tell the Council about my recent trip to North Korea. I think that it is an issue that should be of great concern to the Council. I was there for five days last week. The World Food Programme has been feeding 6.4 million people a year in North Korea, including 4 million children, 400,000 women who are either pregnant or nursing, 400,000 elderly and more than one million people in our food-for-work programme. The budget has been in the neighbourhood of $240 million a year. This month and last month, we have cut our work in half in North Korea, we have gone from 6.4 million people to 3.4 million people. I anticipate cutting that number in half again in January.

We will need 550,000 metric tonnes of food in North Korea next year. At this stage, we have commitments for 33,000 metric tonnes, 23,000 from the European Community and 10,000 from Italy. Our major supporters have not made commitments for our work in North Korea. This is for a variety of reasons, as the Council knows better than I.

The key issue that I am focused on — and the World Food Programme tries to stay focused on — is its agenda of feeding hungry poor people and leaving all the other political issues for others to debate. But we have a general set of principles by which we govern our operation. They speak to accessibility, accountability, transparency and a zero-tolerance policy for foolishness or the inability to work throughout a country.

In North Korea, we are permitted to work in 163 of the 206 counties. We do not have the ability to do a random access check to verify our monitoring, although we do 440 monitoring visits per month. We do not receive a list of the institutional recipients from the Government of North Korea. Therefore, the accountability issue is put into play once again.

I only bring this to your attention because the World Food Programme has 110 employees in North Korea. Sixty of them are North Korean employees and 50 are international employees. We are essentially the presence of the United Nations in North Korea. We work closely with UNICEF, the World Health Organization and other agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, but they have a very

small presence. We have a huge presence. We are the lead agency. Our senior staff do the humanitarian and the residential coordinating work. We are the only international presence that has offices outside the capital. We have five regional offices around the country of North Korea, as well as one in Pyongyang.

I am concerned that it is conceivable that by 1 April, we will not have resources to do our work and that there will not be a World Food Programme and, ultimately, a United Nations presence in that country. For a variety of reasons, I think that is not a good thing for the world. It is clearly not a good thing for the United Nations. And it is certainly not a good thing for the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But I could not come and visit with you and not tell you this story.

We have more demands than we have ever had in our history. We are working very hard to address these demands. We focus on the most vulnerable people in a society. We target our work towards women and children. We start with very young children, and we work up to approximately the age of 12. Then we work with the elderly. We do a lot of work in paediatric hospitals and orphanages. We do a lot of supplemental and therapeutic feeding that makes all the difference in the quality of life of a very young child.

A child that is born to a healthy mother and has good nutrition in his or her first two years has a very good chance to have the brain and body develop. A child that is born to a poorly nourished mother or does not have adequate nutrition during his or her first two years will have irreparable damage done to the brain and the body. That is why our focus on children is so incredibly important.

I have given the Council the text of my statement and tried to review with you my principal concerns. The issues in Africa are huge. There are 40 to 50 million children of school age in Africa that are not in school and who need to participate in a school feeding programme to get them to come to school. The school experience is fundamental to getting at the HIV/AIDS issue. Education is the only opportunity that they will have to think about alternative lifestyles. The loss of mom and dad on the farm changes the family structure and changes the output of the farm. It is more dramatic than I think I could ever describe. That is why the school experience is so incredibly important. In Zambia, half the children of school age have dropped out of school; in Zimbabwe, 25 per cent. Those are devastating numbers. But I would be happy to hear the Council's questions or to have a discussion.

Michael Usnick is the representative of the World Food Programme here in New York. He is available to members of the Council at all times. Many of you are our very good friends. I see my friend from Ireland. Ireland has been one of our best supporters and has increased their support by 23 per cent a year. We also have great friends in Cameroon and China. So, I feel like I am among friends and am grateful for this opportunity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, for the comprehensive and alarming information that he has given us.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): May I, at this first meeting, briefly pay a warm tribute to the outgoing presidency of the Council and warmly welcome you, Sir, to the presidency. My delegation looks forward to working closely with yours.

I should like particularly to congratulate you on convening this afternoon's meeting. We find it a welcome and imaginative initiative to invite James Morris and the World Food Programme (WFP) here to talk to us. We think that this sort of initiative helps to build a fuller understanding of conflict prevention in the Security Council's work and we see this as a contribution to getting different parts of the United Nations system to work more effectively together.

We would like to thank the World Food Programme for its efforts. We understand the challenges that the agency confronts when 80 per cent of its budget is directed to humanitarian emergency operations. It must surely be an objective for us all to see that percentage reversed back towards where it was 10 years ago, when 80 per cent of WFP's efforts were directed to development.

Part of that effort must lie in addressing the link between conflict and food insecurity. We see a clear link between peace and security, on the one hand, and food security on the other. Conflict can be a major cause of food crises and, at the same time, food insecurity can be sometimes a direct cause and sometimes a contributory cause both of the start of conflict and of its prolongation, be it through refugees

and internally displaced persons or through competition for natural resources, such as water.

Mr. Morris was kind enough to make several references to the United Kingdom's investment in basic agricultural development. The point here is that we consider food insecurity to be a symptom of a wider phenomenon — that of poverty. Our increased investments in agricultural production in less developed countries are based on the perception of that link and the recognition, therefore, that poverty and conflict are far too often handmaidens that go together. We need to look at how food, poverty and conflict link together and recognize the need to address those links in our discussions in the Council on peace and security.

If I might, I have four brief questions to address to Mr. Morris.

One is to ask whether the World Food Programme is confident that those who need food aid in Africa are receiving it and whether it is satisfied that it has sufficient mechanisms for monitoring this.

A second area that we would be interested in exploring is how WFP is coordinating with other agencies to ensure that any potential for conflict in the areas in which it is working is minimized. We would be interested in Mr. Morris's comments on coordination between the World Food Programme and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for example, on dealing with food insecurity in conflict situations and the handling of food aid in those areas.

Lastly, I have a question about the situation in Southern Africa, which is clearly very grave. We would be interested in the views of WFP on the extent to which this crisis is caused by drought and the extent to which it is worsened by Government policy. Mr. Morris made reference to the role that economic policy and Government decisions can play in this area. I have Zimbabwe particularly in mind in this context.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): First of all, let me extend to you, Sir, my very warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. This is an excellent manner for Colombia to be exiting the Council.

I should like also to express my very warm gratitude to Ambassador Wang Yingfan and the whole Chinese team for their excellent presidency last month.

We would like to thank Mr. James Morris for his very comprehensive and very useful briefing. We were particularly interested in the views that he expressed with respect to the need for Governments to stress the importance of agriculture in their policies. I think this is extremely important and we look forward to having some more useful briefings and strategic papers on how Governments can undertake agricultural policies in order to find some measure of food security.

Mauritius, as a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), is extremely concerned about the alarming humanitarian situation in our region. We know that Mr. Morris and his team visited the region two months back. They must have witnessed the devastating effects of extreme hunger and the spread of HIV/AIDS. In some countries, families and children are taking very extreme measures to survive by living on wild fruit, which is often poisonous. The very worst period of the crisis, which is the rainy season, is yet to come. According to recent press releases from the United Nations Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office in Southern Africa, the humanitarian relief operation for Southern Africa is falling short by 400,000 metric tons of food and even the next season will not enable farmers to produce enough food to support the population because of the intensification of El Niño.

I know our colleague from the United Kingdom has talked about the combination of drought and the current policies undertaken by some Governments that might have exacerbated the situation. Clearly, however, in the Southern African region we have had a situation of extreme drought for quite a number of months, which is the main cause of the problem that we are having in that region.

There is a likelihood that crop production could drop even lower, thus necessitating food relief efforts to stretch beyond 2003. It is alarming to note that the number of people from SADC countries who will continue to suffer from food crises until next year is now estimated to be close to 15 million. My delegation would like to hear from Mr. Morris on the strategy that the World Food Programme (WFP) is adopting for its operations and resource needs to face this grave situation.

We have a second concern that is also connected to that region — the status of the genetically modified food products that are currently being sent to some of

the countries of SADC. We all know that donations of food to WFP include those containing genetically modified products and that some countries are quite legitimately concerned about the potential risk to the biological diversity of their maize varieties. As we all know, they have expressed reservations on receiving such food products. In some SADC countries, the milling of genetically modified products, especially whole maize kernels, is being undertaken, but not all of them have the capacity to do so.

We understand that the United Nations agencies involved in the humanitarian operations are planning to establish a policy for food aid involving genetically modified products or food derived from biotechnology. We would like to get more information about the safety of such products and about how much research has been carried out to ensure that these do not have long-term effects on the health of the population and, more important, that they do not have an effect on the environment where these products are likely to be used.

Finally, we would like to urge donors to increase their pledges, especially towards the work that is being done by the World Food Programme. We also make a special appeal to donors of food grains to consider sending non-genetically-modified products to countries in need.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): I join my colleagues in congratulating Colombia on assuming the presidency of the Council this month and, of course, in expressing appreciation to the delegation of China for their presidency last month.

We would also like to thank Mr. James Morris for his very comprehensive briefing on the food security situation in Africa and you, Mr. President, for arranging this briefing today on a very important issue.

I have two main points to make and a few questions that are related to those points. My first point is that it is obvious that food insecurity has many causes and that some factors are beyond our control. Mr. Morris has explained how adverse climatic conditions are certainly causes beyond our control. But he and, I believe, our colleague from the United Kingdom have also mentioned that sometimes national Governments have control over their economic, agricultural and public policies. In relation to that point, I have one question. Working within the context of the dual mandate of the World Food Programme (WFP), that is to say development and dealing with emergencies, would it be possible for the WFP to develop programmes in Africa that are self-sustainable and that would be able to reduce the number of or eliminate chronic emergencies?

My second point is a general point. Mr. Morris spoke of the increased demands on the WFP within the eight months since he has taken over as Executive Director. But our research has shown that there appears to be a paradox between the abundant food surpluses today and the fact that more people are starving today than ever before. I would first like to ask Mr. Morris whether he would agree that such a paradox exists and, if so, if he could comment on the possible causes of that paradox. Finally I would ask whether Mr. Morris has any suggestions on how to turn the situation around.

Mr. Williamson (United States of America): Our congratulations go to our Colombian President on assuming his position. I would like to thank World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director Jim Morris, both for his presentation and for his good efforts over these last months to avert famine and starvation in Africa.

The situation in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa is grave, with some 30 million people at risk of starvation. Drought is one cause of the crisis, but poor Government policies are as much to blame. Indeed, there is scholarship that concludes that the vast majority of all famines in recorded history have resulted from Government policies, not natural causes. Famine is not a natural occurrence and is not inevitable. Where famines take hold we must look for the failures of governance, of development and of assistance.

Clearly, productive investment in agricultural and rural development to boost agricultural productivity is essential. Science and technology, including biotechnology, have great promise for allowing African agriculture to keep pace with gains in the rest of the world and to contribute to Africa's development. However, if widespread famine is to be averted in Africa, the international community must act immediately to mobilize adequate levels of assistance. The United States began to react to the crisis in Southern Africa earlier this year and to the crisis in the Horn in September.

In Southern Africa we have tried to provide sufficient food assistance early on in order to prevent a

famine, not respond to one. The United States Government has provided or pledged half a million metric tons of food to the Southern African region at a total value of approximately $266 million. In addition to food assistance, the United States Government has provided more than $10 million in non-food assistance to the affected countries for regional management and logistics, agriculture, supplementary and therapeutic feeding, emergency health care and cholera response and prevention.

In the Horn of Africa, food aid requirements are projected to range between 1.5 and 2.5 million metric tons to meet the needs of 11 to 15 million people. Experts fear a repetition of the horrendous events of the 1980s. The United States Government has often been able to meet up to half of food aid requirements for the Horn of Africa during times of crisis. However, drought in the United States and a corresponding rise in food grain prices will reduce the availability of United States food assistance worldwide this year. At best, we will be able to supply only about one third of what countries in the Horn of Africa will need during this crisis.

Despite our efforts, much more needs to be done. We strongly encourage other donors to find the resources to respond to this urgent situation in Africa. We urge others as well to help settle unwarranted fears about available food supplies and to keep the focus on getting safe, nutritious food to the hungry.

In Southern Africa, the crisis is most dire in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Even with 100 per cent funding of the World Food Programme appeal, and even if Governments and commercial import predictions are fully realized, there will be a significant cereal deficit. Commercial markets, however, have not functioned well due to centralized marketing and foreign exchange issues.

Government policies on genetically modified food aid have also hindered the food aid distribution process. The United States is deeply concerned that our efforts to provide desperately needed assistance could be delayed if not derailed by the confusion that prevails over biotechnology food issues. The whole-kernel maize being provided by the United States Government as part of our relief assistance is the same as that eaten by millions of Americans daily. It is safe and wholesome and can make the difference between life and death for millions of Southern Africans. Many Governments in the region already recognize this and are distributing United States Government-provided maize or maize flour to their people.

The United States Government is firmly committed to materially aiding the nations of Southern Africa and has been first among international donors to recognize the scale of the problem and has dedicated resources toward meeting the needs. However, some recipient and/or transit countries continue to have concerns about accepting whole-kernel biotech maize. We respect those Governments' decisions, and our goal is to work with those countries in an effort to help them better understand the facts and science of biotech foods so that their concerns do not lead to delays that risk endangering the well-being of millions of people.

We are consulting with the affected States to adopt an agreement to allow the unrestricted import and distribution of local aid, including biotech produce, on an emergency basis for the duration of this crisis. At the same time the United States Government is concerned that food aid in the crisis in Southern Africa is being used as a tool to inflame the debate about biotechnology. It is important that decisions about food aid that may contain biotech products be based on sound science. Given the urgency of the circumstances and the availability of safe United States food, we urge those countries with concerns to reconsider their restrictions on United States maize. The United States Government remains concerned about starvation among the people in the region and continues to stand ready to provide our food assistance. We do not believe there are food safety problems with biotech food. The United States Government does not segregate maize by seed origin, and we buy the commodities on the open market. This food is the same as the food eaten by Americans and has passed the regulatory process of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture. Commissioner Burn, from the European Union, also has issued a statement that recognized biotech varieties of maize to be safe for human consumption. We also believe that potential environmental problems such as cross-pollination with local varieties are not significant.

A number of countries have approved biotech maize varieties — including South Africa, Argentina and several European States — following economic, environmental and health-safety reviews. The United States Government has a seven-year track record of

consuming biotech commodities that speaks to their food safety and environmental benefits for producers and consumers. Biotech food is safe, wholesome and nutritious.

Severe food shortages have resulted in abnormally high prices, making food unaffordable for many rural and urban families, particularly in Zimbabwe, Mali and Zambia. The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the region has left large portions of the population increasingly vulnerable to health problems associated with the lack of food.

Detrimental policies, particularly in Zimbabwe, have aggravated the effects of lower than average rainfall. Since January 2002 the United States, through the World Food Programme (WFP) and World Vision, have programmed 210,000 metric tons of food assistance for Zimbabwe. Of that total, nearly 150,000 metric tons have arrived in the region. Much of it is currently stored in the region due to delays caused by Zimbabwe's recent decision to insist that all biotech corn be milled prior to importation. That requirement substantially raises costs, hastens storage losses and reduces the amount of food available for emergency relief. Zimbabwe has traditionally been a food exporter, supplying much of the food imports taken in by other countries in the region. The Government of Zimbabwe's violent and chaotic seizure of land from commercial farmers has decimated the most productive component of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector, reducing agricultural production by nearly 70 per cent in the last two years and crippling its ability to feed not only its own population but also neighbouring countries.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe's economic policies have exacerbated agricultural conditions. Zimbabwe's economic disruption is typical of an economy in the midst of a devastating war. In 2001 and 2002 Zimbabwe's has been the poorest-performing economy in Africa, with negative growth rates of 8.5 per cent and 10.6 per cent, respectively. But in Zimbabwe there is no invading militia or domestic rebellion. But as a result of the current drought and, to a more significant extent, due to its own policies, the food crisis has gotten worse. The threat of calamitous famine is, in large part, a consequence of misguided Government policies. Price controls inhibit production and the trade in food staples. The continuing monopoly of the Government of Zimbabwe's grain marketing board on commercial imports of grain, combined with foreign exchange restrictions, make agricultural inputs such as tractors and fertilizers unavailable or prohibitively expensive. Production estimates in the agricultural industry indicate 26 per cent negative growth this year.

There have also been numerous reports of the Government of Zimbabwe using food as a political tool and denying it to opposition areas. For example, in the Insiza district, WFP suspended food distribution after activists and officials of the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, intimidated its implementing partner and distributed three metric tons of food commodities to party supporters. To date, the issue has been unresolved. Personnel of the United States embassy and the United Nations looking into the hunger issue among displaced farm workers have been attacked by war veterans. The United States cannot accept any act of politicization of food aid. Those actions must be investigated, and we believe that the Secretary-General and the international community should consider how best to ensure that food is not used as a weapon or a political instrument in the region.

Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa face the real possibility of mass starvation. Hunger is already severe in many areas. Averting a catastrophe requires broad and urgent international support, increased resources, new tools and better use of existing ones, resolution of concerns over biotech food and real reform in crisis countries. We will do our part and will work with the World Food Programme to support it in this vital task. Famine should not be happening in the twenty-first century. If we can avert disaster this time, we should look much harder at how to help create conditions that will make the chance of it happening again — especially on this scale — much smaller.

In summary I have three questions. What is the role of food-import policies in terms of the threat of famine? What is the role of Government food-distribution mechanisms in terms of the threat of famine? What is the impact of theft and corruption in terms of the threat of famine?

Mr. Corr (Ireland): As other colleagues have done, may I first warmly congratulate Colombia, and you personally, Sir, on assuming the presidency for the month of December. I would also like to thank China's Ambassador Wang Yingfan and his colleagues for a very successful and effective presidency in the month of November. I would also like to thank Mr. Morris for a very clear and comprehensive assessment of the

gravity of the food crisis situation facing Africa and, indeed, the international community. It was a very clear, focused, honest and candid presentation, for which we are very grateful.

Three general themes emerged from the presentation made by Mr. Morris. The first is that this is a humanitarian situation of the utmost gravity, with 14 million people in Southern Africa and the same number in the Horn of Africa affected. It is a situation that is intolerable from a moral and humanitarian perspective. I think it must first be seen in that context.

Secondly, as Mr. Morris rightly said, it is also a threat to international peace and security of the most fundamental nature — if not today, then perhaps tomorrow or the day after. That is of course the current situation in crisis situations such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and other areas recovering from enormous levels of violence and conflict, where the situation concerning reintegration programmes for internally displaced persons already poses major social challenges throughout those countries and also poses challenges to the work of the World Food Programme (WFP).

Another theme that came across very clearly in the presentation is the fact that a central issue is political commitment, particularly by developed countries, where the resolution of many of these crises is in our hands if we display imagination and good will. What is now important is that that imagination and good will be shown not just in meeting the short-term humanitarian crises, but in support for the WFP and its long-term development work, which has suffered, as Mr. Morris said this afternoon, because of the scale of resources now required on the humanitarian front.

In saying that, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Morris and everyone else involved in the WFP for the work that they do. That is work that is carried out for the entire international community. It is work that matters a great deal to the peoples of Africa and other areas that are suffering food insecurity. A major debt of appreciation is owed by the entire international community for it.

This also relates, of course, to the issue of support and donor contributions, which was a strong theme of the presentation. I am grateful for the kind words that were said about my own country, Ireland, and also about the European Union, which has substantially increased its funding in the recent past, including in the response to the current situation in Africa.

Three points struck me while listening to the presentation about which I would like to ask questions in a very general, not detailed, way. First, in terms of the challenge facing Governments and the private sector in Africa, the document of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) states clearly that the agrarian system and biases in economic policy are clear factors in causing food insecurity, as well, of course, as drought and the instability in world commodity prices. I would be grateful for an assessment, however brief, of what can be done by Governments and the private sector in terms of the provision of irrigation equipment for developing arable land to address the food insecurity situation.

That also links up with the question of Government policy that Ambassador Williams and others have mentioned, the strong theme that comes across in NEPAD of the importance of developing community leadership and Government policies to support it. That was also a theme that I think came across recently in the International Food Policy Research Institute programme, which emphasized that the role of small farmers is probably the single most important dimension in addressing food insecurity in Africa.

A second question that struck me in this area was the recent report by the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources, which very strongly emphasized that — and this goes to the point of long-term programmes, not just to the short-term issues — low soil fertility and degradation of land suggest there is a very real need for very long-term support by the WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the international community in general in tackling soil degradation and strengthening soil fertility. I believe the figure for degraded cropland was 72 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, and 31 per cent for pastureland.

The third point is the level of support that has been given in terms of long-term development funding by the international community. The NEPAD paper makes the strong point that support by developed countries, including the multilateral institutions, has seriously diminished for agriculture over the past decade. The figure of the World Bank from its loan

portfolio, as far as I recall, was around 39 per cent for agricultural development in 1980, I believe. Now the figure is something less than 10 per cent. That is a very serious factor in terms of tackling food insecurity, if that trend persists. So, would it be possible to say what can be done by the WFP to encourage donors to return to long-term agriculture support development, particularly through your own programmes?

A final point that I did want to ask about, which was touched upon by Mr. Morris, is the question — without getting into a wider debate — of globalization and protectionism. There has been some criticism in some African countries that the liberalization of their economies has not been met with a reciprocal response by developed countries in terms of reduced tariffs and an easing of protectionism in agriculture. It has also meant that in some countries, for example in Senegal and Tanzania — I think I saw recent figures on fisheries — there has been a diversion of food production for exports, given its greater value, which has implications for the local economy where the promotion of exports can weaken the local base. It can also lead to weakness in prices of commodities, which is another issue. But I think that is a related point.

Finally, in terms of the immediate crisis involving the planting of seeds for next year — something that the WFP has been emphasizing in recent weeks — is this something, in terms of support by the international community, or indeed by the WFP, about which much can be done over the coming weeks, or is the shortfall in seeds, fertilizers, hand tools, and so on, a real difficulty in terms of planning for a reasonable crop, given climate conditions next year?

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and thank you for having convened this meeting. Allow me also to associate myself with all those who have welcomed Mr. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP). We congratulate him on his comprehensive briefing to define a food security strategy to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in Africa, which attests to the force of his conviction. Bulgaria fully supports the global campaign "Alert for famine in Africa", which the WFP initiated to provide food to 30 million victims in Southern Africa and West Africa and in the Horn of Africa.

The crisis we are facing is unprecedented in its magnitude and depth, and we, the members of the Security Council and members of the international community, must make special efforts to provide immediate and massive support. The major challenge now is to put an end to this serious situation and to prevent it from deteriorating or becoming catastrophic.

In addition to the urgent response of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, the Security Council must act for the long term, learning lessons from past experiences. In that regard, I wish to follow up some of the points made by Mr. James Morris. The international community must use its modern information technologies and early warning systems in order to prevent further famine of such magnitude from happening in the future. We recall the appeals launched by the WFP this year to draw the attention of the international community to the urgent food situation that has already developed in the six high-risk countries in Africa because of the drought, flooding or economic and political instability. That tendency has to be reversed through decision-making, and we must guarantee that the attention of donors is not diverted from potential crises.

My second point relates to the need for better synergy and strategies between emergency assistance and the follow-up programmes leading to sustainable development. The practice of past decades has shown that, because of the limitations of international funding, such funding in recent years has decreased considerably once the crisis had been terminated. The success of the WFP mission depends to a large extent on getting food aid to the most devastated populations — women, children, young girls, the elderly and those who are furthest from food distribution centres. The communications system and the governmental structures in the region, as well as access to the various regions in need are all critically important. Here I wish to stress the responsibility of recipient States to coordinate and use the assistance provided by the international community. In many cases, their political action aimed at promoting decisive reforms in agriculture or education is crucial to avoid renewed cyclical crises, such as those caused by drought or flooding.

In conclusion, I would like to follow up the question asked by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning cooperation between the WFP and organizations within the United Nations system,

stressing cooperation between the WFP and UNAIDS, given the importance of problems that relate to the HIV crisis.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, this is our first public meeting since you assumed the presidency of the Security Council, and I would like to tell you how pleased and appreciative we in Cameroon are to see you in the presidency. I wish to assure you of our fullest cooperation. I also would like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate our Chinese colleague for his excellent presidency throughout November.

My delegation is gratified that Mr. James Morris has taken the initiative of coming to address the Council about the alarming humanitarian situation in Africa, in particular from the point of view of the food crisis. The information he has given us was clear, comprehensive and very useful, because he has given us an overall exhaustive picture of World Food Programme (WFP) activities throughout the world. He has also communicated to us the acute nature of the food crisis facing Africa.

Mr. Morris emphasized the diversity of the causes that underlie the food crisis in Africa. He very aptly highlighted weather-related factors, health, landmines, governance issues and conflict situations. Cameroon plays host to two WFP offices, both national and regional. We are in a position to assess how apt his comments are. In Central Africa, the climate in the northern part, as well as civil disorder, have been the most obvious causes of famine in the region, and we are very grateful to WFP for its efforts.

I would like to underline the importance of a horizontal approach in supporting WFP. We must support and encourage agricultural production in the vicinity of deficit areas, so that this may serve as a supply base. I would like to commend WFP on its efforts to take into account the alimentary habits in the areas concerned, thus avoiding having to create new eating habits for an already impoverished population.

The many questions I would have liked to put have already been raised by some of the previous speakers. Nevertheless, I would still like to ask Mr. Morris what could be done to reduce dependency on a small number of donors. We thought we heard him say that 10 entities provided 90 per cent of WFP's resources.

And finally, we would like to congratulate Mr. Morris and his team for having stimulated this important debate and for their commitment in emergency situations that face the entire international community. I appeal to all donors and the international community to further diversify sources of funding.

Mr. Traoré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I would like to take the opportunity of this public meeting to convey heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of our Council for the month of December. We assure you also of our full support. On behalf of my delegation, I would convey to your predecessor heartfelt congratulations on the particularly effective way the Chinese delegation conducted the Council's business last month. Allow me also to convey congratulations to Mr. James Morris, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), and to say how very much we appreciate the quality of his briefing and, above all, the commendable efforts he has constantly made at the helm of WFP since he recently assumed office.

Famine in Africa has become much worse following the natural disasters and conflicts that have afflicted people there. Flooding and drought are the main causes in the southern region, the Horn of Africa and in some Sahelian countries in the western subregion of Africa. The magnitude and depth of these crises require that urgent comprehensive action be taken. The international community must do everything possible to mobilize the necessary resources for the success of the campaign to prevent any worsening of the situation and to save millions of lives that are at risk.

We take note of the joint appeal that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the United Nations launched on 18 July 2002 in New York to solicit assistance, in order to prevent the humanitarian crisis from getting any worse. We appreciate what was done by the General Assembly on 21 November, when, in its resolution 57/44, it called upon the international community to respond generously to the needs resulting from the drought in southern Africa by, inter alia, giving support to strategies for preventing and managing drought.

On this occasion, we wish to reiterate our commitment to General Assembly resolution 46/182, which highlighted the need for a more consistent and firm approach in organizing humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian aid provided by the United Nations goes beyond emergency assistance and must be centred on long-term economic development and recovery. That is part and parcel of the declaration made by world leaders at the United Nations World Food Summit, held in Rome in 1996, to halve the number of starving people by the year 2015. My delegation believes that, in trying to attain that goal, cooperation and coordination by Governments on an increased scale for the victims of these crises are essential. The safety of humanitarian workers, too, should be the focus of special attention.

Before I conclude, I have a few questions to put to Mr. Morris. First, within the context of the famine alert campaign in Africa, we would like to find out whether the allocation and management of food aid will take place on a national or regional level. According to you, Sir, what should be the most effective approach for Africa?

My second question is: what could be the role played by civil society — particularly that of women — in implementing the food aid policy within the context of this campaign?

Question number three: how, in your opinion, do you think one can move from emergency food aid to real development for the affected people?

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We should also like to thank the Permanent Representative of China and his team for their excellent work last month. In addition, we welcome Mr. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), and we thank him for his comprehensive briefing on the WFP's implementation of programmes to feed hungry people throughout the world, particularly in Africa.

The 25-per-cent reduction in humanitarian funding is a matter of great concern. The WFP requires continuous funding so that it can fulfil its mandate and implement its programmes. The encouragement of investment — particularly in agriculture — could provide at least a minimal degree of food security for affected countries and peoples suffering from hunger for various reasons. My delegation agrees with Mr. Morris that we should invest in school feeding programmes, because educating healthy children means preparing a better generation for building a better society — a generation with the necessary awareness to achieve economic, social and political stability, especially in countries that suffer from food problems as a result of climate, occupation, scarcity of economic resources and war, among other things.

I should like to ask Mr. Morris about WFP policies with regard to school feeding in Africa so that children are not forced to resort to illegal acts to make a living. Are there programmes to raise the awareness of children — particularly girls — in addition to programmes to provide them with the necessary nutrition?

Mr. Stanislavov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I should like to welcome you, Mr. President, to your responsible post and to congratulate the former President of the Security Council.

We are grateful to Mr. Morris for his very informative and useful briefing. The critical food situation in Africa definitely requires an immediate reaction by the international humanitarian community, in particular by the World Food Programme (WFP), the main United Nations agency created especially to fight starvation in the world. For its part, Russia intends to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to African countries and, as Mr. Morris said, has been providing such assistance through WFP channels.

Overcoming the food crisis in African countries is a comprehensive, multifaceted challenge. Many efforts will be required to resolve armed conflicts and to achieve sustainable development in the region, including through eliminating poverty, promoting better governance, overcoming the consequences of natural disasters, helping to increase food production and creating a stable market for food.

In that connection, I should like to ask the Executive Director how the WFP — in addition to providing humanitarian assistance in the form of food — can help to resolve those key problems that Africa faces? I understand that the WFP cannot resolve those problems alone and that the efforts of all international organizations and donors are required. It is exceptionally important to coordinate international assistance, and I think a role could be played in that regard by the Economic and Social Council, which is able to provide that kind of coordination.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Morris to address concerns, respond to questions and make final comments.

Mr. Morris: I thank Council members for their comments, their questions and their guidance. I shall try to comment briefly on the issues that have been raised. We will also answer thoroughly, in writing, each of the questions that have been raised, and we will share a complete response to each question with each member in the next three or four weeks. Each question deserves a voluminous answer, and I am sure that that is not what members want at this late hour.

With regard to the United Kingdom's question as to whether those who need food really receive it: yes, I believe so. We place a heavy premium on accountability, and we have elaborate, sophisticated systems to monitor, measure and evaluate our work. That is more difficult in some places than in others, but it is a top priority and the key to our having the trust of our donors, and I can assure the Council that it happens. We work well with the other United Nations agencies. I pay tribute to the United Nations Children's Fund, to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and to the World Health Organization (WHO). We work together all the time. Our people in the field work superbly together, and that is really where harmony is most important — on the ground. We work well together in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, even though we have a huge operation there and the other operations are small.

On the question about Government policies as they relate to incentives, to open markets, to support for communal and commercial agriculture, to distribution systems and to markets: the world knows what the ingredients of a successful economy are. Clearly, investment in infrastructure, in sophisticated agricultural technology and in research is important.

The issue of genetically modified (GM) foods, raised by Mauritius, is very important. It will also be a very important issue for the United Nations going forward, because the amount of food produced via genetically modified technology, or biotechnology, will grow exponentially in the coming years. There will be more GM food in the future, and it will be available around the world. Our policy is to ask a Government that gives us food or sells us food to certify that it meets the health and safety standards for consumption by its own citizens. Once we have that certification, we go to the FAO and the WHO and test it against something called the Codex Alimentarius, which talks about food safety standards from their perspectives. Once we are certain that those standards have been met, we make representations to that effect to recipient countries. Each country is sovereign and is entitled to make a decision in the context of its own situation.

Until the current situation, virtually no one ever rejected GM food. I think the world is absolutely certain that there are no health and safety issues associated with human consumption of GM food. There are other issues that people are concerned about, such as the pollination issue. I have to remind folks that, first and foremost, a huge number of people are at risk of starvation. In the beginning, 75 per cent of the food we had to work with had a biotech component, whether we bought it in Argentina, the United States, Canada or parts of Africa, including South Africa.

I think the issue of human safety is resolved. We are in the business of providing food for people to eat. We are not in the business of providing animal food and we are not in the business of providing food via seeds to be planted. Our focus is on keeping people alive, alleviating their suffering and ultimately offering them some hope. As the Council knows, the FAO, the WHO and the WFP have issued statements — as has the Secretary-General — affirming their confidence in GM food.

On the issue of sustainability, clearly there is a paradox, given the surpluses that exist around the world and the number of people who are starving. There are a lot of issues here. The good new is that many countries that were recipient countries of ours at one time are now donor countries, because they have agricultural surpluses. China is a perfect example. China is becoming a very good donor. The success of China's agricultural economy is extraordinary. The same can be said now of India and the Russian Federation.

At the end of the day, however, African countries need the ability to produce and export their own food. Clearly, issues of tariffs, the use of surpluses and trade need to be developed in such a way that developing countries are encouraged to produce and export.

The United States asked questions relating to food import policies, Government distribution policies

and theft and corruption policies. Clearly, all of these affect the agricultural viability and food security of a country. All that is pretty easy to understand.

Ireland asked about investment in agricultural systems. I should tell you about Malawi, which has thought through an agricultural strategy according to which a $77 million investment in irrigation technology in that country would make it self-sufficient with water forever. The FAO and the WFP have experimented in Malawi with conservation technology — a new way of farming in which a very modest $100,000 investment seeds produced $7 million worth of product, with new technology.

Clearly, the issue of long-term programmes is one of the key things that we need to keep our eye on. Soil degradation is an important issue. Our work in reforestation and our food-for-work programmes that rebuild the soil are important. But this is an issue of technology, talent and the sharing of research around the world — and that is clearly available.

On the issue of the level of support and long-term development, the trend has been against long-term development and in favour of short-term emergency investments. My own view is that an investment in short-term emergency work can become a very powerful long-term investment. If you are feeding people who are in a crisis in such a way that children can go to school, or if you are feeding people in such a way that their health or nutrition is dramatically improved, these become very important long-term development goals — they are the basis of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

With regard to the question about agricultural inputs, I am afraid we may be a couple of weeks late. The FAO did a very good job in Zambia in helping that country to gather agricultural inputs. But the fact of the matter is that in the six countries that I have been most focused on, donor support for agricultural inputs, health, water, sanitation and education has been less than 25 per cent. The support for food is now close to 80 per cent. We missed a huge opportunity because either we did not have seeds and fertilizer and implements, or, where the seeds were available, people did not have the cash to buy them. And I am terribly worried that we missed a planning opportunity to begin to get the process back on its feet. The amount of money that the FAO was seeking for agricultural inputs was very modest compared with the food, but the donors did not focus on it. So I would beg you, as you look at these sorts of issues, to consider helping to provide resources for seeds and fertilizer so that you can begin the planning process.

Bulgaria made a point about early-warning systems and information technology. We make huge investments in information technology. We provide what we call a vulnerability assessment map of every country in the world, which we make available to everyone at no cost. It uses the best information technology in the world and enables us to target our work in just the way that it ought to be done.

The world needs to focus on early-warning systems and assessment mechanisms. Beyond agriculture, the six countries of southern Africa desperately need assessment mechanisms for health issues. The infrastructure for health is even weaker than the infrastructure for agriculture. So many health professionals have lost their lives to AIDS, and so many doctors, nurses and pharmacists have left the region to go to work in South Africa or the United Kingdom, that the professional community is largely depleted.

We work closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and with Stephen Lewis, the Secretary-General's Special Representative. Once we realized the impact of AIDS, we changed the nature of our food basket. A person who has AIDS needs 500 extra calories a day, and a person who is vulnerable also needs extra calories every day. People in that same category need much more protein. We have changed our food basket to respond to that.

I appreciated the question from the representative of Cameroon — a country that has provided extraordinary leadership for the World Food Programme. He asked what can be done to reduce dependency on a few donors. We have 15 or 16 significant donors. There are 20 more countries that can help us in a substantial way, and many of them are represented around this table. We are working very hard to make the case for substantial support from countries such as China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile — countries that have the wherewithal to help us. My own goal is for every one of the 191 Members of the United Nations to make a voluntary contribution to the World Food Programme — even if symbolic — every year,

because we all have responsibility for those beyond our borders, even if we have the most difficult circumstances imaginable.

I am working nearly full-time raising money. I do not mind that; I like that. But we need people to help us. The magnitude of the task is enormous.

I appreciated the question from the representative of Guinea about the Millennium Development Goals and the safety of our workers. More people doing humanitarian work for the United Nations have lost their lives than have people doing peacekeeping work. We have lost two people in the last two months. We have a wonderful memorial in our building honouring those who have lost their lives in the service of the World Food Programme.

The representative of Guinea also spoke of the role of women. Indeed, the role of women is extremely important in feeding people, and that is why we are heavily focused on the role of women in Afghanistan. Even when the Taliban was in charge, we operated 206 bakeries, which were essentially all operated by women, and half of them were owned by women. They have made all the difference in the world.

Syria asked a question related to school feeding and other awareness programmes that can be pursued through school once the children are there. I believe that the best way to attack the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty and hunger is to feed the 300 million children who are hungry, half of whom do not go to school. For 19 cents a day, we can feed a schoolchild. The leverage on that investment — economically, socially, politically or from a humanitarian point of view — is enormous.

I appreciated the question posed by the Russian Federation about resolving key problems in Africa for the long term. Working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WHO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and FAO, we are able to focus on long-term health issues. UNICEF does a superb job focusing on water, sanitation and nutrition issues.

The issues of education also are paramount. I think that the United Nations operating agencies do a pretty good job with the resources we have to work with in tackling these very difficult issues.

In closing, let me say that we will respond to the Council in some greater detail and share with it our information. I would ask members of the Council to please support us financially and to make the case to their Governments as to the importance of what we do in terms of the peace and security agenda. I would ask them also to take the longer view about investment in development and to think about school feeding in that context. The Millennium Development Goals of halving hunger and poverty, reducing infant mortality, eradicating HIV/AIDS, enrolling children in school and improving maternal health are powerful things and areas in which the world ought to make substantial progress with the wealth we have today.

I am grateful for this opportunity. I could go around the table and thank each country for what it has done for us. Norway did the most brilliant thing this year. The Norwegian Red Cross gave us 250 trucks in southern Africa -four-wheel-drive, 30-ton trucks that can go through the mud. It was the most brilliant gift we have received all year. Many of those here have done comparable things for us, and we are incredibly grateful.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Morris for his presentation; indeed, the manner in which he has addressed the myriad of concerns has been very encouraging for us in the Council. He made very good use of his time in terms of motivating the international community.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.